

Carpenter's Letter

(Continued from Page Twelve.)

The valuable carpets and other things had been disposed of without an accounting. The result was a wholesale dismissal of officials and the revocation of the unnecessary contracts.

The czar's palaces are worth looking at. There is nothing like them upon earth. Tsarskoe Selo, where his majesty spends much of his time, has floors of ebony and mother-of-pearl and walls inlaid with malachite and lapis lazuli. There is a room in it inlaid with tortoise shell, another walled with bamboo and many apartments hung with goblin tapestries. It has a ball room which covers more than half an acre floored with wooden mosaic, a Chinese room furnished in teak wood, a Japanese room and other conceits.

This building is situated in a park of 2,000 acres, in which there are eighteen miles of drives and walks. This palace was built by Catharine the Great, one of the most extravagant as well as one of the greatest of Russian rulers. When the buildings were first constructed she ordered some of them covered with gold leaf, and as the story goes it took \$300,000 worth of precious metal to gild them. After a while owing to the dampness of the climate the gold began to peel. Catharine then proposed to cover it with paint, whereupon some speculators offered her \$250,000 for the privilege of scraping off the gold.

"I am not quite so hard up," said the old empress, "as to have to sell my old clothes to keep myself going." And she sent them away and painted the gold.

Another grand palace is that of Peterhof, on the Gulf of Finland, and another is the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg.

I went through the Winter Palace the other day. It is situated on the banks of the Neva river, running along them for about three American city blocks. It is, I believe, the largest palace of the world. It is of four stories and covers as much ground as the capitol at Washington. It has about fifteen acres of floor space on its different stories and if you will imagine a fifteen-acre field divided up into rooms, some big enough to hold an ordinary palace and others as small and cozy as any in your own house, you may have some idea of this structure. The color of the building is a rich old red. It was painted last year and it took tons of paint to cover it.

The interior of the palace is more like a museum or an art gallery than a home. I was an hour walking through its principal rooms. I had to show my passport and apply for a card of admission before I could enter, and one of the servants went with me, describing the wonders in Russian. I bowed my head, although I did not understand, and relied on my eyes alone for information.

I could see, however, that the palace is grand beyond description. It has acres of mosaic floors as smooth as a piano and so waxed that you can see yourself in them. The rooms are walled with satins and silks matching the furniture, and they contain works of art from all parts of the world. Some of the ceilings are upheld by Corinthian columns plated with gold and the walls of some rooms are covered with gold leaf. There are chandeliers of crystal and in the museums gold plate of great value. There are miles of paintings, numerous statues, inlaid tables and other things of artistic merit.

With all this the palace is far from comfortable. The most of it is barnlike to an extreme and I do not wonder that the czar is glad to get out of it and away from the ghosts of its past.

Indeed, the modern rulers of Russia are a refreshing change from their ancestors. The grandfather of Nicholas was the most advanced monarch of his time, and his great-grandfather, Alexander I, introduced western civilization into Russia. Alexander II freed forty-odd million Russian serfs, and had he not been assassinated Russia would be a constitutional monarchy today. I learned much about Alexander III during my stay in St. Petersburg ten years ago, when he was still on the throne. He was an ideal ruler, as simple as the present czar and just as fond of his family. He did what he could for his people, notwithstanding he was daily in danger of assassination.

The old czars were cruel to an extreme. Take Ivan the Terrible, who built many of the finest churches. He became emperor at the age of 13. One of his amusements was fastening his enemies between boards and sawing them in two from head to foot. He had a festive way of enclosing a man in a bearskin and sticking the bounds on him, and other royal amusements which were rather hard on his subjects.

One of the most beautiful churches of the world was built by Ivan. It is that of St. Basil at Moscow, a mass of onion-shaped domes and other conceits. The architect was an Italian. When it was completed the emperor asked him if he could make another like it. He replied that he could, whereupon Ivan ordered his eyes to be put out in order that no one else might have a palace like him.

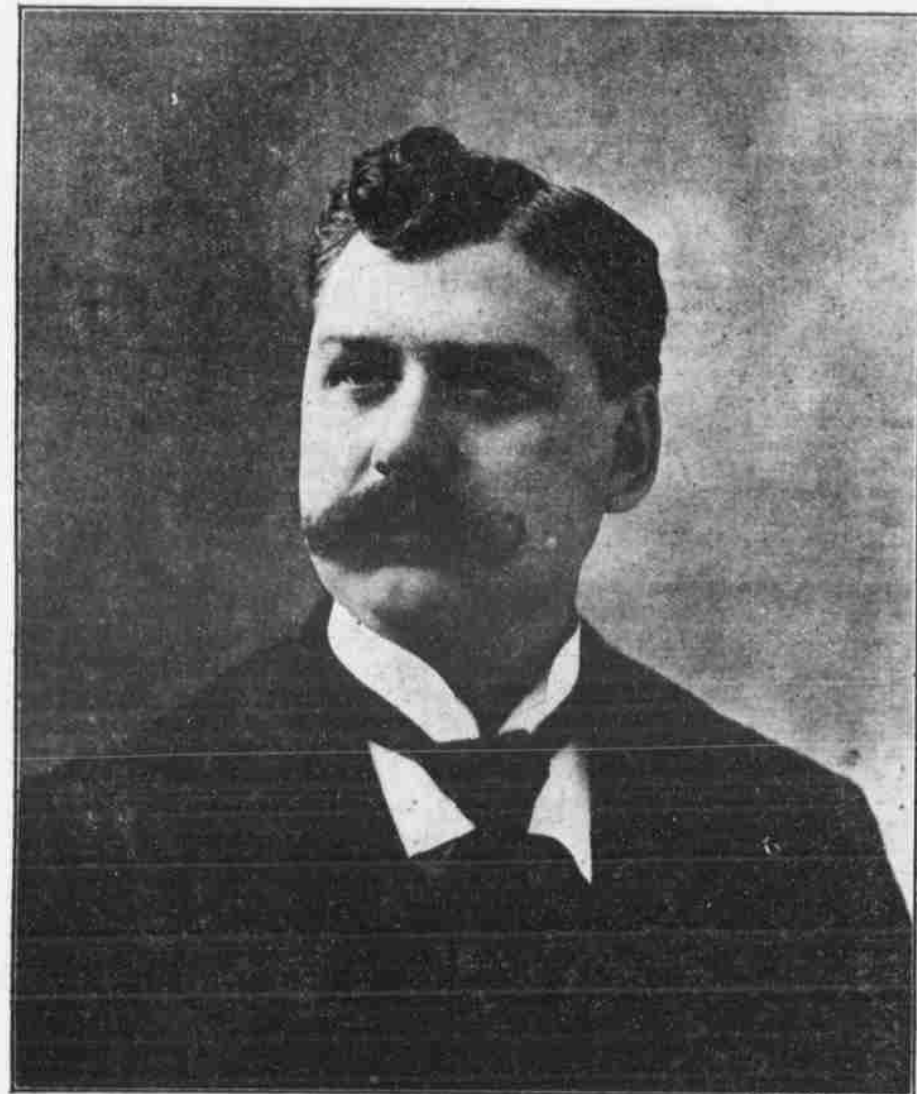
Another rare bird was Peter the Great. He did a lot for Russia, but it was in his own way. He built this city of St. Petersburg, founding it upon a swamp, because he said that he wanted a window where he



SOME OF THE DELEGATES TO THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF SUPERINTENDENCE IN SESSION IN OMAHA—Photo by a Staff Artist.



BRUCE FLEMING OF MISSOURI VALLEY, Ia., WHO HAS JUST ENTERED ON THE PRACTICE OF LAW.



BYRON P. DAGUER, DEADWOOD, NEWLY ELECTED GRAND MASTER OF THE MASONIC GRAND LODGE OF SOUTH DAKOTA.



DR. LAWRENCE PILLSBURY OF FREMONT, Neb., WHO HAS WON HIGH HONORS AT BELLEVUE MEDICAL COLLEGE, NEW YORK.



MR. AND MRS. JACOB WOLF OF NORTH PLATTE, Neb., WHO WERE RECENTLY MARRIED AT PLATTSMOUTH.



could look out upon Europe. He went to England to learn shipbuilding, intending to found a navy. While in London he visited the court and saw there the lawyers, with their wigs. He asked what those curious men might be and was told.

"Lawyers are they?" was his reply. "Why, I have only two such men in my whole kingdom, and I intend to hang them when I get back."

This czar killed his own son and divorced his wife. He then married a peasant girl, who ruled in his place after his death.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Pointed Paragraphs

A bare hook will do when a person fishes for compliments.

Gossip is the ammunition used in the gun of idle curiosity.

Some women are almost as flighty as some bank cashiers.

Give the amateur violinist a word of en-

couragement and plenty of elbow room and he will do the rest.

It's a poor family tree that produces nothing but blockheads.

People sometimes count their chickens before the eggs are laid.

When some people make up their minds they use mighty poor material.

There are some queer people in this world. Occasionally a truthful man goes fishing.

Talk is cheap, and the man who talks

too much often gets liberal and gives himself away.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; thou wilt find several of her at any basket picnic.

Deafness is a terrible affliction to the man who likes to hear himself talk.

Many a man who is born to rule takes unto himself a wife and surrenders the job.

A few weeks after marriage love is apt to soar away in the hot-air balloon constructed during the courtship.—Chicago News.